

# Louisville/Jefferson County Metro Government Waste Management District



**Yard Waste Container Regulation 51.507R**

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## History

**1990's:** Yard Waste Landfill Ban was implemented to save landfill space. Separate garbage and yard waste collection began.

**2000's:** The separated yard waste became so contaminated with plastic bags that it could not be sold to composting facilities (2006).

**Today:** Yard waste is going to the landfill as “alternative daily cover,” defeating the purpose of separating the yard waste and garbage.

**Removing the plastic makes the compost a useful commodity that can be resold, rather than landfilled.**

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## Why is Plastic a Problem?

- Plastic Does Not Decompose
- It Significantly Increases Processing Cost
- The Yard Waste Ends Up In Landfill



No one wants to buy mulch **littered with plastic**

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## **Removing bags while they are collected significantly increases time and cost to complete route**

- Requires overtime or additional staff and equipment
- Increased risk to workers standing in streets and delay for motorists
- Increased pollution from vehicles running longer to complete the route
- Plastic bags that are removed have a tendency blow away...creating litter.





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## Removing plastic contamination at compost facility

- Facilities quickly become overwhelmed due to the sheer volume of incoming materials.
- Hand removal is inefficient and dangerous. Using low-paid or inmate labor on the ground around heavy equipment is a recipe for injuries or worse.
- Removing plastic from branches and sticks is not easy
- Technology is unable to remove all plastic.



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## Recommended Best Practices

- Mulch and/or compost yard clippings to eliminate cost and need for yard waste collection. **It's Free!**
- Utilize seasonal drop-off centers for yard waste materials. **It's Free!**
- Place yard waste in reusable containers to reduce the need for continual purchase of single-use bags. **Cheapest Method for Collection!**
- Place yard waste in paper bags designed for yard waste collection.
- Place yard waste in compostable bags that meet ASTM D6400 standards.



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## Handling Yard Waste At Home

Experts agree mulching is  
the best way to manage  
grass and leaf clippings

Think about it...Lawn Care  
Companies, Golf Courses,  
and  
Parks **Do Not Pick Up Grass  
Or Leaves**

**Why pay for yard waste  
collection?**

## Michigan State University Turf Grass Sciences

**A common misconception is that clippings left on the lawn will promote thatch buildup.** This is not true.

Clippings do not make significant contributions to thatch and should be returned to the lawn whenever possible.

If clippings are removed, they can be used in compost piles or as mulch. Backyard compost stations are becoming increasingly popular, and grass clippings are a welcome addition.

**Mowing tree leaves in the autumn and returning them to the turf system is an outstanding alternative to raking and bagging.** MSU studies have evaluated the effects of mowing tree leaves into lawns. In these studies, up to 6 inches of various types of tree leaves were mowed into lawns. No adverse effects were detected on the lawns.

Reports from professional turf managers who have been practicing this technique on golf courses and commercial turf have been positive.

<http://www.turf.msu.edu/mowing-lawn-turf>

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If you require yard waste collection, consider an appropriate reusable container.  
Over time, it's cheaper than using single-use bags!

Cost of Reusable Containers vs. Plastic Bags Over Time					
Reusable Container	Cost per Use*				
Cost per Unit	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
\$20.00	\$0.63	\$0.31	\$0.21	\$0.16	\$0.13
\$15.00	\$0.47	\$0.23	\$0.16	\$0.12	\$0.09
\$10.00	\$0.31	\$0.16	\$0.10	\$0.08	\$0.06
Single-use Plastic Bag (Cost per Use)	Overall Cost*				
\$0.30	\$9.60	\$19.20	\$28.80	\$38.40	\$48.00
\$0.20	\$6.40	\$12.80	\$19.20	\$25.60	\$32.00

\*Based on 32 uses per year, yellow indicates when the price of using plastic bags exceeds a \$10 reusable container, orange when the price exceeds use of a \$15 reusable container, and red when the price exceeds use of a \$20 container(s).

**Durable grade of galvanized metal or plastic from 20 to 35 gallons capacity.**

The container shall be provided **with two lifting handles on opposite sides**

Containers that are emptied manually **shall not exceed 60 pounds when filled...**





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## Paper Yard Waste Bags

This bag was filled with grass and sticks then soaked with garden hose, left out through four different rain events, and after each rain event it was tossed in the air.



Tougher than  
conventional  
plastic bags  
Stands up so you  
don't bend over  
Easy to fill  
openings

The key is to fold the top to prevent water from pooling inside

Available at many local stores  
for as little as 5 bags for \$1.88  
(38 cents each)



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## Helpful Video's

### Leaves

<http://www.scotts.com/smg/goART2/video/mulching-leaves-video/12200016///>

<http://www.scotts.com/smg/goART2/InfoHowTo/mulching-leaves/11800002///>

<http://www.tlehcs.com/special%20topics/Leaves%20Arent%20Trash/mow%20them.htm>

<http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/430/430-521/430-521.html>

### Grass

<http://www.scotts.com/smg/goART2/InfoHowTo/8-lawn-myths/12300004>

<http://www.yardcare.com/video/turf-talk-with-toro/mulch-or-bag/>

### Home Composting

<http://www.ecocycle.org/backyard-composting>

<http://http://www.epa.gov/composting/benefits.htm>